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EDUCATION WEEK

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Report Expected To Sharpen Policy Debate on Homeless

By Lisa Jennings

WASHINGTON—The majority of homeless children in the United States do not attend school and lack access to the educational services they are entitled to, a report to be presented next week to the Congress will argue.

The report, being compiled by the new office for the education of homeless children and youth within the Education Department, represents the first stage in federal efforts to help states make adequate plans to deal with a problem that officials at both levels of government say is more pressing than they had realized.

Both state and federal planners last week acknowledged, however, that the forthcoming report's count of homeless children, to be released Feb. 15, will represent "very conservative" numbers supplied by the states. The state counts come from rough estimates and anecdotal evidence, they said, and reflect political pressures on officials to downplay the scope of the problem.

Those interviewed last week agreed that their tallies most likely represent only a third of their states' total population of homeless children.

Even so, said Edward E. Smith, the federal official who is preparing the report, "the

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AP/WorldWide Photos

Barbara Bush reading to homeless children in Washington last week.

Futrell Backing Full Funding for A Merit-Pay Plan

Hints Policy Shift on Locals' 'Risk-Taking'

By Lynn Olson

In a rare move, the president of the nation's largest teachers' union has publicly praised the work of a local affiliate to devise a performance-based pay plan for teachers.

But the suprise statement may mark a shift in the union's attitude toward risk-taking local affiliates, rather than a change in its policy on merit pay.

In a speech before the Fairfax (Va.) Chamber of Commerce Jan. 27, Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of the National Education Association, said that if the local school board votes to fully fund the performance-based pay plan next week, it will mark a "truly historic" date in education.

"To my knowledge," she said, "Fairfax would then be well on the way to becoming the first and only county in the nation to institute a successful performance-based teacher-compensation plan."

Fairfax County's superintendent, Robert R. Spillane, last week characterized the speech as a "major shift" for the N.E.A., which has previously refused, in Mr. Spillane's words, to "in any way support, condone, or encourage" efforts to create merit pay for teachers.

"It certainly is a departure," he said.

The union traditionally has resisted performance-based pay on the grounds that salaries should be raised for all teachers, not just a select few. In addition, it has questioned the fairness and accuracy of the evaluations associated with such plans.

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1 in 5 Schools Miss Asbestos Deadline; Could Face Fines

By Ellen Flax

WASHINGTON—Schools could be fined up to $5,000 for not meeting the first deadline of the federal asbestos law, according to a policy statement issued last week by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Agency officials estimated that approximately 20 percent of all public and private schools missed the October 1988 deadline and could be fined.

Negligent schools, however, may be given an additional 60 days to comply with the law before being penalized, according to the policy statement.

The document outlines how the agency will enforce the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986. It required schools to inspect for asbestos and submit management plans to state officials by Oct. 12, 1988. Schools that could not meet the deadline were required to file a request for a deferral of up to seven months by the same date.

Although the 1986 law is the most stringent yet passed, many observers have questioned the agency's ability to enforce it, citing a history of inadequate federal efforts under previous asbestos laws.

The agency has about 30 staff members nationally assigned to the effort, and officials in a dozen states have pledged to join in enforcement activities. E.P.A. officials said last week that they had no plans to expand their enforcement staff.

According to the document, schools that did not meet the first deadline—and schools that violate other parts of the law—could face fines ranging from $40 to $5,000.

Schools that despite repeated requests fail to comply could face a heavier financial penalty—a maximum fine of $5,000 per day. And asbestos professionals whom schools have hired to comply with the law could be fined up to $25,000 a day for serious violations, the statement notes.

Because the federal law prohibits the agency from issuing fines for most potential violations, the document says the E.P.A. will, for

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Holmes Group Finds Mixed Results In Universities' First Reform Efforts

By Lynn Olson

ATLANTA—Initial attempts to improve how teachers are prepared at leading research universities have produced mixed results, according to a new study.

The forthcoming report by the Holmes Group, a consortium of 96 higher-education institutions, cites "unmistakable" signs of progress in some areas but says they coexist with minimal change and continued obstacles in others.

A draft of the unusually frank document, "Work in Progress: The Holmes Group One Year On," was obtained during the organization's third annual meeting here Jan. 27-29.

It provides the first indication of how seriously research universities have taken their pledge to reform teacher training since joining the Holmes Group in 1986.

The document summarizes the progress reports submitted by 71 institutions after their first year in the consortium.

Although 25 universities did not submit formal reports, some of them are also engaged in innovative work on their campuses, according to Holmes officials.

The Holmes Group's 1986 manifesto, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, sent shockwaves through the education community, particularly its recommendation that the undergraduate education major be replaced with a prolonged sequence of study—including a liberal-arts major and more extensive

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Alabama Pension Fund's Television Venture Sparks Political Feud

By Mark Walsh

The proposed purchase of a commercial television station by the Alabama teachers' and public-employees' retirement systems has sparked a major controversy in the state and underscored a political power struggle between the Republican governor and the Democratic head of the Alabama Education Association.

Gov. Guy Hunt has vowed to fight "with everything in our power" to keep the Retirement Systems of Alabama from taking over WSFA-TV, the NBC affiliate in Montgomery and the state capital's dominant station.

The retirement funds, acting through a subsidiary called RSA Media Corporation, reached an agreement Dec. 15 to purchase the station for $70 million from Cosmos

Broadcasting Corporation, based in Greenville, S.C. The sale of the station is awaiting approval by the Federal Communications Commission.

Pension officials last week said they believed it would be the first purchase of a television station by a public pension fund.

"We are not aware of any other pension system that has done this," said William Walsh, an official of the Alabama retirement systems.

Other public entities own commercial broadcast properties, including the city of New York and a number of state universities, according to Alan E. Glasser, a staff lawyer with the Federal Communications Commission.

But Bruce Hineman, executive secretary

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Racial tensions that have split the city of Dallas must be attacked through a massive education campaign, both in schools and in the community, a mayoral panel has concluded. **Page 7.**

21st-Century Demography
New projections by the U.S. Census Bureau show a slowdown in population growth, but the number of elementary-school-age children is likely to remain above its current level until 2038. **Page 6.**

Mountain State Budget Crisis
Faced with mounting fiscal problems, West Virginia lawmakers last week adopted the largest tax increase in state history and ordered stiff budget cuts that include school aid. **Page 11.**

Drug-Free Work Sites
Most state agencies and many school districts will be required to certify that their workplaces are free of illegal drugs, under new federal regulations that take effect next month. **Page 16.**

Proprietary-School Crackdown
Federal officials, citing allegedly false claims that had earned a major trade school millions of dollars in student aid a year, last week moved to cut off such aid to four courses offered by the school. **Page 18.**

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An *Education Week* guide to the annual convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in New Orleans, La.
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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

American Jewish Committee Backs 'Values Education' in Public Schools

Despite concerns among many parents that efforts at "values education" could become "a smokescreen for teaching religious precepts," the public schools have a responsibility to instill basic moral principles in students, a national Jewish organization argues in a report to be released this month.

If they do not teach values, warns the Education Policy Task Force of the American Jewish Committee, educators may foster "moral confusion" in students.

In its report, the task force emphasizes that "it is not necessary to teach religion in order to teach values," such as honesty, responsibility, and loyalty.

"What we are trying to do is to help create a climate in which these emotional issues can be discussed more rationally," said Marilyn Braveman, education director for the New York-based organization.

"We say that schools have to start consciously being aware of the values they are transmitting," she continued.

The year-long study of aspects of public education, entitled "Educating for Diversity: Teaching Values, Cultures, and Languages," also examines issues, such as bilingual education, relating to the increasing heterogeneity of the school-age population.

The report calls for renewed support for "intergroup-relations" programs aimed at promoting understanding among students of different backgrounds. It argues that such programs should touch on the experiences of Jewish and other "ethnic" Americans, as well as those of members of racial minorities.

STATES

Oregon Rule Would Mandate Number of Classroom Hours

Some Oregon students could be spending more hours in school each year under a new rule being considered by the state board of education.

The proposed change would replace the state's minimum requirement of a 175-day school year with a rule specifying the total amount of annual instructional time for each grade level. Students in grades 9-12 would have to receive 1,020 hours of instruction each year. The requirements for other levels would include 930 hours for grades 4-8, 840 hours for grades 1-3, and 435 hours for kindergarten.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Verne A. Duncan said the change was proposed after surveys taken across the state during the 1987-1988 school year showed wide variations in the amount of time students spent in class.

The proposal will be the subject of a public hearing this month.

■ **"Turf" battles between unions representing Pennsylvania teachers and government employees would come to an end** under a new, three-year "no raid" agreement.

Leaders of the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees agreed last month that if one union already represents employees of an office or institution, the other will not attempt to organize there.

Organizations whose employees are not represented by either union will continue to be fair game for both.

Under the agreement, the teachers' union, an affiliate of the National Education Association, will have exclusive jurisdiction over education professionals while AFSCME will have the franchise for non-education government employees.

But both unions will be allowed to organize all other employees, including such education-support personnel as secretaries and cafeteria workers.

Affiliates of the N.E.A. and AFSCME have forged similar agreements in a number of other states.

■ **Record cold temperatures forced the governors of Montana and North Dakota to close all elementary and secondary schools in their states late last week.**

In both states, schools were closed last Thursday and Friday, according to state education officials.

The frigid weather had earlier prompted school shutdowns in Alaska, affecting as many as one-third of the state's public-school students. Closings had been reported in 33 of Alaska's 55 districts, enrolling an estimated 35,000 students, officials there said last week.

The cold air was trapped over Alaska for more than two weeks before moving into the lower 48 states. Accounting for the wind-chill factor, temperatures in some parts of Alaska had dropped to 100 degrees below zero.

■ **Arizona middle- and high-school students must earn passing grades in all courses to be eligible for extracurricular activities,** a new state rule says.

The rule also bars students from dropping courses they are likely to fail in order to maintain their eligibility for athletics and other activities.

For the past two years, the state has allowed school districts to set their own eligibility standards. But critics complained that some districts were letting students who failed a course continue to participate as long as they had an overall C average.

The legislature voted last year to require the state board of education to set statewide standards. The board did so last month.

DISTRICTS

Parents' Move To Hire Teacher Spurs Equity Debate in Maryland

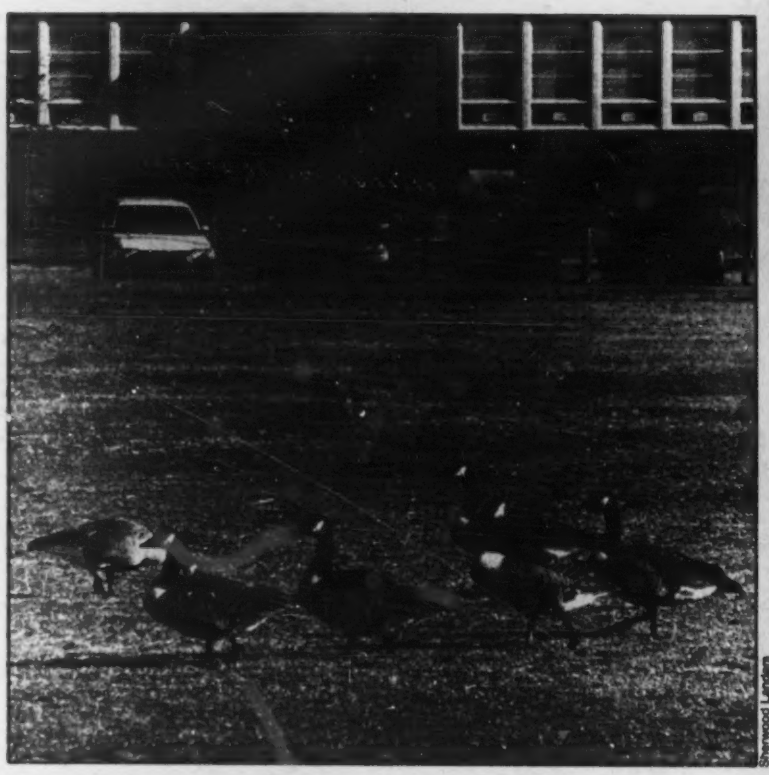
A group of Montgomery County, Md., parents agreed last week to drop plans to hire a mathematics teacher for their children's school after the district superintendent promised to seek county funds for an additional instructor next year.

The parents' effort had generated heated controversy in the district over the fairness of allowing parents to provide resources for some schools that would not be available to others.

Members of the parent-teacher association at the East Silver Spring Elementary School, a magnet school for mathematics and science in the Washington suburb, had planned to pool their own money to hire a part-time "volunteer" to supplement the teaching staff, after failing for three years to persuade the district to furnish one.

But Superintendent Harry Pitt quashed

A Fowl Predicament



Shirwood Landers

A gaggle of Canada geese waddles across a school playfield in South Yarmouth, Mass., where they have set up residence. Officials are concerned about the health threat posed by the birds' droppings, but have been unable to shoo them away.

the plan, arguing that the district historically had opposed such arrangements as giving an "inequitable" advantage to students in well-to-do areas.

Parent leaders had vowed to ignore Mr. Pitt's decision and openly criticized the district's management during a meeting of the school board late last month.

After meeting with the parents, however, Mr. Pitt agreed to ask the county council for $30,000 to hire another teacher for the school. He denied that his move was in response to parental pressure, saying that he made the decision after reviewing staff and enrollment figures at several schools.

■ **The Fairfax County, Va., school system is not responsible for the legal costs incurred by a child with AIDS who sued to be readmitted to school,** a panel of federal judges has ruled.

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel in Richmond ruled that the district did not have to pay $15,380 in lawyers' fees because its January 1988 decision to readmit the child was not influenced by a lawsuit filed on his behalf during the preceding week.

The child had been barred from kindergarten during the last two months of 1987.

In a related development, a Florida district has agreed to pay $350,000 to a child with AIDS who was barred from school between February and September 1987.

The settlement between the Manatee County school board and the child, Christopher Case, is expected to be approved by a federal judge in Tampa, said Judy Kavanaugh, a lawyer for the boy.

■ **Mid-year pay cuts affecting teachers and other employees of the East St. Louis school district constitute an unfair labor practice,** according to a complaint filed with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board by the city's teachers' union.

The board has agreed to hear the case and to seek an injunction to bar the district from carrying out plans to change its benefits policy and to withhold up to two days' pay each month, said Terry Turley, president of the East St. Louis Federation of Teachers.

Mr. Turley said that existing contracts with employees prevent the school board, under strict state supervision because of the district's weakened financial condition, from cutting salaries in order to reduce the budget by $1 million.

■ **School officials in Horry County, S.C., returned books dealing with abortion and homosexuality to school-library shelves late last month,** after their lawyer advised them that inclusion of the volumes did not violate the state's new health- and sex-education law.

The law prohibits teachers from providing information about abortion, and allows them to refer to homosexuality only when discussing sexually transmitted diseases.

The officials said they removed the books because they were unsure whether the law could be interpreted to include school libraries as an extension of the classroom, or librarians as teachers.

■ **Preschool-age children who live near a Leeds, Ala., factory that recovers lead from batteries will be tested for unsafe levels of the metal in their blood.**

Children are believed to be especially vulnerable to lead exposure, which has been linked to heart and kidney problems as well as learning disabilities.

Area residents had pressed for the tests after learning that a higher proportion of learning-disabled students had been found at the local elementary school than at other schools in the district.

The tests will be conducted this summer.

■ **A high-school hockey player in Wisconsin died of heart failure last month after being hit in the chest by a puck.**

Jeff Merrill, a 15-year-old member of the team from Goodrich High School in Fond du Lac was struck in an area of his chest that was not protected by padding, said Ron McCreedy, assistant principal at the school.

The youth went into convulsions immediately and was pronounced dead 30 minutes later. The county coroner said the force of the puck stopped the boy's heart.

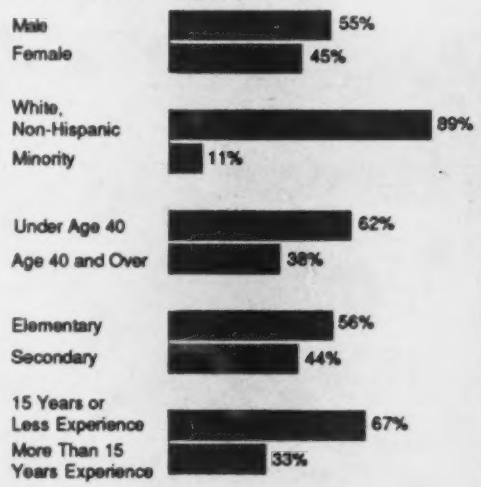
DIMENSIONS

Moonlighting Teachers

Public-school teachers are considerably more likely than the rest of the working population to "moonlight," or hold a second job, according to a new study by the National Center for Education Statistics.

On the basis of a 1985 survey, the report estimates that 525,280 teachers—about 26 percent of the 2 million full-time teachers in public elementary and secondary schools—held a second job at some point during the year.

By contrast, only 5.4 percent of all employed workers were holding down a second job in 1985, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics information cited by the report.



The survey found that teachers were more likely to moonlight if they were male, white, under age 40, and had less than 15 years experience in the field. Secondary-school teachers were more apt to moonlight than were those working in elementary schools, the study indicated, although the absolute number of moonlighting teachers at the lower level was larger.

Copies of "Moonlighting Among Public School Teachers" (CS 89-119) may be obtained without charge by writing to the Educational Information Branch, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Room 300, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20208.

PEOPLE

■ Movie theaters in the Paterson, N.J., area were sold out several weekends ago, when they offered sneak previews of "Lean On Me," a film about **Joe Clark.**

The film depicts the principal's controversial efforts to improve troubled Eastside High School.

Mr. Clark, who is portrayed in the film by actor Morgan Freeman, says he has not let fame go to his head. "I understand success and failure are imposters, and I take them both lightly," he told reporters.

Nor does he expect a financial windfall from "Lean on Me," which he predicts will yield him only "a pittance." The film's nationwide premiere is scheduled for early next month.

■ **Steve Knight,** a Maine teacher, and 18 of his students were scheduled to leave this week for Vietnam, on what is believed to be the the first trip to that country by a group of American public-school students.

A teacher at Lawrence High School in Fairfield, Mr. Knight organized the 17-day trip as the culmination of an independent course entitled "Vietnam Learning Group," which drew participants from five local high schools.

The travelers, who underwrote some of the $2,300 per-person cost of the trip through fundraising, will begin their tour of Vietnam in Hanoi and proceed south to Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. Along the way, said Mr. Knight, the group will visit schools, museums, underground tunnels left by the Viet Cong, and a hospital where victims of the herbicide "Agent Orange" receive treatment.

But the most satisfying part of the trip, said Mr. Knight, will be the opportunities to "meet and interact with Vietnamese people, who are very interested in meeting Americans."

A Lesson, for a Song

With any luck, elementary-school students in Fulton County, Ga., will soon be inviting parents and teachers—and perhaps even members of the Atlanta Opera Guild—to attend opening-night performances of their unique, operatic versions of "Peter Pan," "Robin Hood," and "The Tortoise and the Hare."

The performances will mark the culmination of "Opera Works for Learning," a six-week interdisciplinary program designed to promote children's learning through creative activity. Under the guidance of Carroll Rinehart, a nationally known music educator and author who is currently the school district's artist-in-residence, students at three schools have been busy creating plots, writing dialogue, and composing melodies for their operas.

Creating an opera teaches students about many things besides music, notes Joanna Rainey, the district's fine-arts and humanities consultant. Developing dialogue requires language-arts skills, she says, while staging and creating sets calls for mathematical ability.

"We are using the art form of opera as the vehicle to creative learning," she explains.

The program is funded by the Atlanta Opera Guild and the Fulton County Public Schools Foundation. Sponsors hope to bring it to other schools in the district as well. This summer, a workshop will be held for teachers who might be interested in "conducting" a project themselves.

"The kids love the program," says Ms. Rainey. And because they take their enthusiasm home, she adds, parents, too, have been swept up in the excitement.

—J.W.

UPDATE

■ **Four members of the school boards of Community Districts 9 and 12 in New York City have been indicted by a Bronx grand jury** on charges ranging from bribe-taking to the theft of school equipment. *(See Education Week, Dec. 7, 1988.)*

The grand jury, one of several investigative bodies looking into allegations of corruption in the nation's largest school system, also indicted a former superintendent of District 9.

Meanwhile, the New York State School Boards Association has offered to provide training in ethics and other leadership skills for candidates for the 288 seats on the city's 32 community school boards that will be at stake in a May election. Newly elected board members will be able to receive training throughout their three-year terms of office.

The state association made the offer in response to the corruption allegations, which involve as many as 10 of the city's community school districts.

"One of the things that became evident to the city's central school officials was that these people had not had sufficient training," said Louis Grumet, the executive director of the group.

■ **The Yonkers, N.Y., school board and the N.A.A.C.P. have the right to sue the state to recover some of the projected costs of a planned second stage of school desegregation in the district,** a federal judge has ruled. *(See Education Week, Feb. 10, 1988.)*

The ruling last month by U.S. District Judge Leonard B. Sand cleared the way for a trial in the lawsuit, which contends that state actions contributed to segregation of the district's schools.

Correction

Based on information supplied by the American Bicentennial Inaugural Committee, the Jan. 18 listing of high-school bands participating in the inaugural parade failed to include the Montrose (Pa.) Area High School band.